



**REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
May 2010**

**David L. Parkyn  
President**

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On Twitter earlier today one of our graduates from last spring wrote: “When I told the CEO of BigBros/Sis I had graduated from NPU he was immediately interested and said, ‘What a legacy of service.’” Well, she made my day when I saw this, and I imagine she makes your day as well. Perhaps this is all I need to say for my report to the Board and should conclude right here!

### **Years One, Two, and Three**

At the end of its first year, the Collaboratory for Urban and Intercultural Learning sponsored a student awards and recognition dinner. The event attracted several hundred students, faculty, and friends representing cultures from across America and around the world. This truly intercultural event impressed everyone with the progress we’ve made at North Park to be “purposefully multicultural” and to celebrate student contributions toward this end. The next day one of the students who attended the dinner expressed her joy this way:

My expectations were for a few long-winded speeches, passing out awards, and perhaps some music. I thought the highlight would be a good meal and time with friends. Instead, almost everything was a highlight in and of itself! The event, the content of it, was meaningful and powerful. It felt like a truly multi-cultural event; it was the first time (of my four years at North Park) I have seen all the different “groups” on campus actually well represented in a single room.... [At the end of the evening] I left the room feeling prouder than I have ever felt to be a North Parker.

Earlier in the spring semester we received notice that for the second consecutive year North Park has been named to the President’s Higher Education Honor Roll for Community Service. This recognition highlights the work of our students on the streets and with the people of Chicago.

And for the third consecutive year a graduating senior has received a Fulbright award—except that this year TWO North Park students have received this award! Laura Johnson has studied biology and Spanish, has been accepted to medical school, and

expects to practice medicine in communities of need within Spanish-speaking America. Ruth Blidar is the daughter of immigrant parents from Romania, and studied in the Chicago Public Schools; she has been a commuter student throughout her years at North Park, completing a degree in history with teacher certification. Laura will teach English during the coming year in Mexico; Ruth will spend the year teaching American history to children in her parents' home country.

## **Enrollment Update**

We continue to work hard to recruit the incoming class for fall 2010 at all program levels. This is proving to be a challenge, especially with new first-year undergraduates. The number of students who have applied and have been admitted is tracking close to previous years but deposits (which indicate an intent to attend North Park) lag behind previous years.

We have been assisted by the analysis and recommendations of consultants from Scannell and Kurz. Based on their recommendations we have been, and will be, seeking to improve our efforts in several areas:

- We must shift our overall approach to enrollment from “admitting” students to “recruiting” students.
- We must give greater attention to (a) increasing our inquiry pool and (b) increasing the conversion of inquiries to applications.
- We will increase attention to staff development and focus an improved professional approach to student recruitment and enrollment.
- We will fully implement database resources available through Datatel.

We have a good product, an attractive location, and a great heritage—all offered at a desirable price point. Where we have fallen short is in the effectiveness of our recruitment effort.

We also recognize that retention is an important part of enrollment management. For this reason during the fall semester we increased efforts designed to support students who were contemplating leaving North Park before completing their course of study. We had good hopes for these efforts, but the results were disappointing. Fall to spring semester retention decreased this year when compared with recent years.

	Retention Rate First-Year Students	Retention Rate Transfer Students
Fall '06 to Spring '07	91%	86%
Fall '07 to Spring '08	92%	80%
Fall '08 to Spring '09	89%	89%
Fall '09 to Spring '10	84%	70%

During the early summer we will work once again with consultants from Scannell and Kurz, this time focusing on our retention efforts. We need to explore where our primary

deficiencies are to be found, how we can be more alert to and respond more effectively to the needs of students, and better understand what keeps students here and why some choose to leave before their studies are completed.

## **Faculty Interests**

As a governance unit the undergraduate/graduate faculty has been involved this year in a number of areas, and some of these have included significant challenge. Bylaws needed to be developed for the new Faculty Senate, the General Education program is under review, work on the self-study places new demands on a large number of people, faculty are encouraged to be more active in student recruitment and retention, and revisions are being proposed for the faculty Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures. In addition, like the rest of the University, the faculty has felt the impact of recent budget restrictions, which for the faculty primarily involve greater restrictions on the offering of low-enrolled courses. And to the extent that selective personnel actions have been part of our budget review this has had an impact on campus morale.

In their report to the Board for the May meeting, the faculty representatives give voice to some of these concerns. These are important to us. Some can and should be addressed, and others are part of a changing environment in higher education. Attention to seeking input when appropriate and explaining decisions as fully as permissible are important, and sometimes even the best process results in a debated outcome.

As an administration we have sought to be alert to these concerns. Sometimes we have changed course, sometimes we have delayed decisions until the coming year, and sometimes we have moved forward with decisions as we deemed necessary. From my perspective we have approached this well, and I know we can do it better.

## **Seminary Leadership**

As a result of the decision confirmed at the February Board meeting to extend the search for new leadership in the seminary, and consistent with the Board's directive, I have prepared a recommendation for how to address leadership requirements during a year when the Office of Seminary President will be vacant. In this work I have consulted with David Helwig, Gary Walter, and Scott Bolinder as the Board advised. I have also discussed the potential needs of the seminary during this unusual year and possible leadership alternatives with some of the seminary administrative leaders and select faculty. And I have held several "open hearings" with the seminary faculty on this and related topics. All of these have been helpful in reaching a recommendation.

I have presented my recommendation in a separate document which accompanies this report. In brief, my recommendation is that during the coming year leadership requirements for the seminary will be assumed by a leadership team comprised of Linda

Cannell, Deb Auger, and Tim Johnson. The group will report to me, I will meet with them on a regular basis approximately every three weeks, and I will spend additional time with the seminary community throughout the year. Additionally, the responsibilities assigned to Tim Johnson will be augmented increasing his work as a liaison with functions and organizational structures in the ECC. I'm confident that this will be a good year at the seminary; our faculty will work well with our students, leadership needs will be well-cared for by the leadership team, and the search committee will lead us to the individual who can best provide ongoing presidential leadership.

## **Comprehensive Campaign**

Mary Surridge and I have dedicated a large portion of our time during recent months to advancing the comprehensive campaign. Specifically, we have continued to work with lead donors to the campaign and we have visited with and solicited each member of the Board of Trustees. Materials prepared for the Development Committee detail these activities further. Subsequent to the May meeting of the trustees we will develop a campaign plan for the next 18 months; we expect to present and review a draft of this plan with the campaign's Executive Committee at its next meeting.

## **FY '10 and FY '11 Budgets**

Our current budget is in good order, reflecting the challenging decisions we made during the spring of 2009. Uncertain enrollment numbers for the coming school year pose some significant challenges in preparing the FY '11 budget. Carl Balsam will discuss both of these areas with the Finance Committee, and we will have opportunity to consider them in the full Board meeting as well.

## **Commencement 2010**

On Friday evening, May 7, the University's annual Baccalaureate Service will be held at Fourth Presbyterian Church on North Michigan Avenue. This year we have encouraged participation in this service by all of our graduates and their families—undergraduate, adult, graduate, and seminarian. We expect a large turnout and a wonderful time of worship, celebration, and prayer.

On Saturday, May 8, we will host three commencement programs – at 10:00 a.m. for undergraduates, at 3:00 p.m. for adult students and graduate programs, and in the evening for the seminary. At these convocations we will recognize and honor two individuals with honorary degrees. In the undergraduate ceremony we will recognize Kevin Leman, author, speaker, and one-time undergraduate at North Park. During the seminary ceremony we will award an honorary degree to Glenn Palmberg, recent president of the Evangelical Covenant Church. Members of the Board of Trustees who

are able to participate in the commencement programs are also invited to receptions for these two individuals—in Hawkinson House for breakfast on Saturday and in Nyvall Hall for a dinner/reception prior to the seminary commencement. Please join us.

### **Trustee Recognition**

As we gathered for this meeting we will take the opportunity to recognize those trustees who are completing the fifth year of their term of service. These include:

- Paul Aley
- Jimmie Alford
- Mark Johnson
- Tim Nelson
- Kristine Strand
- Donald Wahlquist

Blessings to each of you as you travel to this meeting of the Board of Trustees. We are sustained in great part by the encouragement you extend to us, the advice you give so wisely, and the prayers you offer on behalf of all who learn and serve at North Park. Thank you for your dedication to this task, and for your loyal support for this community of learners.